

# Joining SLT

*Partnerships for Excellence*



The Sussex Learning Trust (SLT) has one over-arching aim; namely, to play an integral part in providing the highest possible educational opportunities for children and young people of the area. We try to do this in a number of ways, but predominately via a network of academies committed to partnership working for the benefit of the pupils (primary age) and students (secondary age).

The Sussex Learning Trust believes: -

- Education must be formational and transformational.
- Irrespective of background, all children and young people deserve the very best educational provision and should therefore attend ambitious and dynamic learning establishments.
- Children and young people must feel safe, happy and secure in order to achieve their best and maximise their talents.
- Great teaching and leadership are critical to the success of any educational institution.
- Academies that work in partnership are likely to achieve better outcomes for children than those that work in isolation.

## Why would a school want to become an academy?

Successive Secretaries of State for Education have espoused that 'Headteachers and Governors know best' for their school, their pupils and students. We agree.

### Confident school leaders

- Believe that they really do know what's best for their communities,
- trust their professional instincts and know that, often, to work in partnership with like-minded colleagues will lead to better outcomes for the children as best practice is shared and economies of scale are realised,
- trust themselves to make decisions free from LA bureaucracy,
- want to have control over where their school contracts services from.

These are some of the reasons why Governors and Headteachers decide that to become an Academy is the right thing for their school. The decision to convert doesn't change the core purpose of keeping children safe and helping them to become successful. It does mean that you have more control and with that comes even more accountability, but confident school leaders do not shirk this.

There are two types of conversion to academy status:

**Sponsored** – a school that is in challenging circumstances such as diminishing standards or two or three OFSTED inspection outcomes of 'requires improvement' or worse, might be taken into an academy trust (often a Multi-Academy Trust, MAT) and will be deemed 'sponsored' by that trust. The idea is that a successful trust will be able to 'add value' to the school improvement strategies that the school requires. Usually, the Governing body is given time by the Regional School's Commissioner (RSC) to find a trust that they feel most comfortable with. The responsibility of the outcomes of that, now, academy, rests with the MAT.

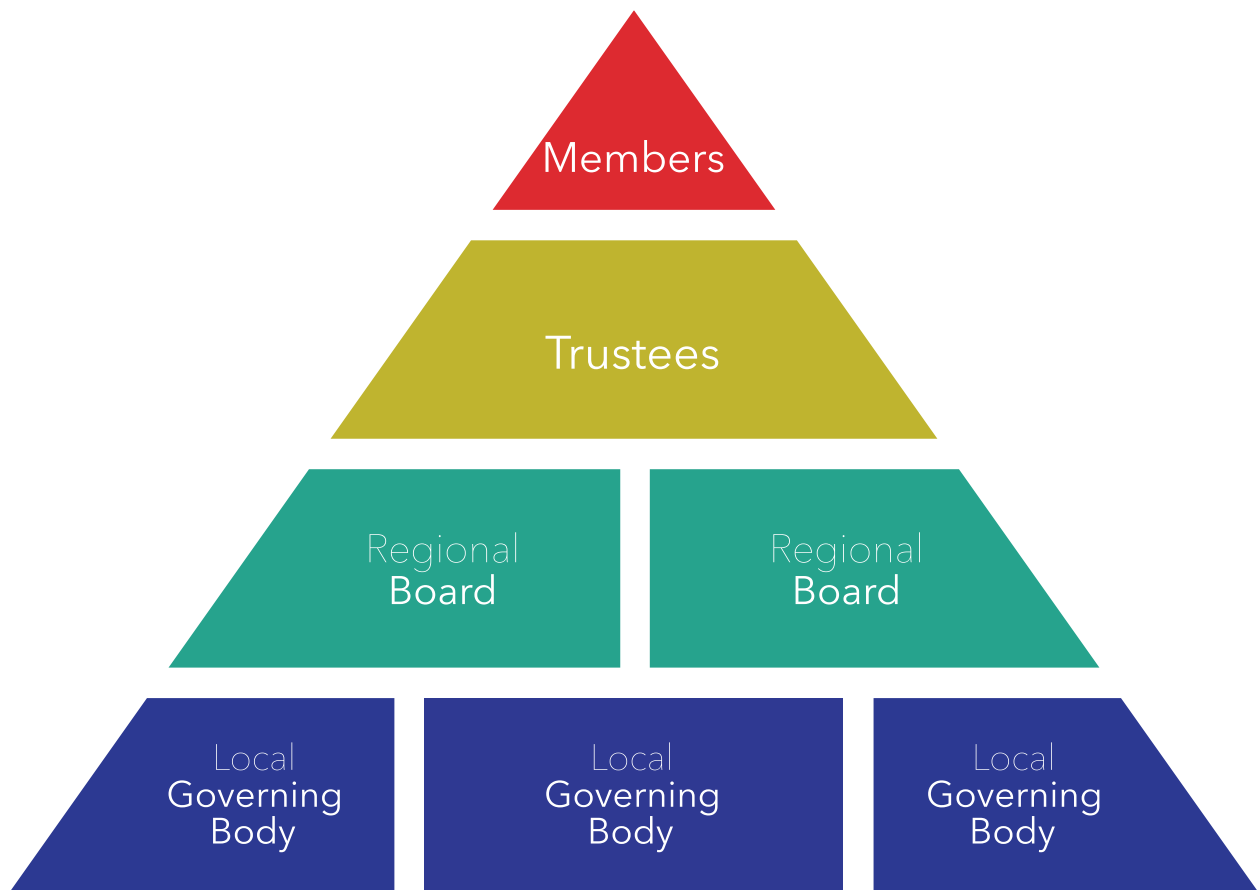
**Converter** – usually a 'good' or better school who wants to benefit from the increased autonomy becoming an Academy brings and, if they decide to join a MAT, the myriad of opportunities that transpire when great school leaders collaborate with one another.

# What are the Key benefits of SLT?

- A local Trust, run by local people for local people.
- A Trust that fervently believes in partnership working.
- We espouse that 'good is not good enough' for our pupils and students.
- A Chair who is a National Leader of Governance commissioned to run national training for Governors by the DfE.
- A CEO who has had two successful Headships with leadership judged to be 'outstanding' in both. Now commissioned as a National Leader of Education to support and challenge school improvement.
- Senior Trust Officers with outstanding records in school leadership. A Secondary expert, Primary experts and Business and Finance experts including a qualified accountant. All have very recent or current 'hands on responsibility' for children outcomes.
- An excellent record of school improvement.
- No unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Highly experienced and outstanding Governance.

## Governance

All MATs have a similar DfE structure for governance. As SLT expands we will move to 'Regional Boards' to make sure each academy has an assigned 'voice' on the Trust Board.



*For illustration purposes only*

## FAQs

Each academy retains its own Governing Body who, through the 'Scheme of Delegation' keeps a good deal of autonomy all the time the academy is delivering 'good' or better outcomes for the pupils or students whilst maintaining a balanced budget.

### **Do we have to 'do things' in a prescribed way?**

In some trusts this is the case; a form for this and a form for that, a common assessment method, prescribed teaching and learning approaches etc. At SLT whilst we are moving towards increased standardisation or aligned practices, this is predominately because our existing Headteachers are synthesizing the best ideas from their academies to give consistency of approaches. For example, internal progress meetings, parent's evenings, assessment and work presentation. We do have shared policies and yet, there is room for local solutions where necessary.

### **Who manages the budget?**

All the time the academy is 'in the black' and expending funds in a prudent manner for the benefit of current and future learners, the LGB and Headteacher control the budget. Later in this document we will explain the Annual Partnership Charge that comes off the academy budget and what services and benefits your academy will derive.

### **Will we have to change our uniform?**

Not with SLT.

### **Our branding?**

No, although there will need to be the SLT logo on headed paper, signs at the front of the academy etc.

### **Will our name change?**

SLT prefer that schools joining have the word 'Academy' after the *predominate*, recognised name of the original school.

### **Will the Headteacher and LGB be able to make their own staff appointments?**

In some Trusts there has to be permission sought to make appointments. Not so with SLT up to positions that will be on the academy's Leadership Team. For Assistant Heads, Business Managers, Deputy Heads and Headteachers the Trust and academy would constitute a shared recruitment panel. The CEO as Accounting Officer is ultimately responsible to the Secretary of State for the outcomes of the academy. However, it is highly unlikely that like-minded leaders would disagree after a thorough interview process.

### **How large is the Trust?**

SLT is a relatively small Trust. At SLT we believe that the number of academies that constitute the MAT is not the critical aspect, rather it is how the MAT is organised to work that really matters. We believe in clusters or 'hubs' so that each academy is an important stakeholder within the locality of approximately 5 or 6 partner academies.

### **How is governance of the MAT structured? Will my academy be suitably represented on the main board of Trustees?**

We want the local Governing Board to retain responsibility for their academy. At present SLT's Board of Trustees is organised so that each academy has a named trustee responsible for ensuring each institution has its views represented. In time, as the Trust expands, we will look to review the structure (see illustration on page 3).

SLT academies become a strategic partner in the Inspire Teaching School Alliance. This creates lots of opportunity to train our own teachers.

### **What is the Headteacher Forum?**

This is a dynamic fortnightly meeting which brings all the academy Heads together to support and challenge each other. This is exceptional CPD for Heads whilst developing a sense of team and shared moral purpose to learn from each other to the benefit of the pupils and students throughout the Trust.





- World Class**  
Relentless ambition for all  
Improvement never stops
- Formational**  
To create  
To inspire  
To aspire
- Transformational**  
'Good is not good enough'  
To 'be the best' you can  
To learn and develop

Sussex Learning Trust academies work collaboratively to provide 'world class' **formational** and **transformational** opportunities helping our young people realise their potential and equipping them in their journey towards personal **fulfilment** and responsible **citizenship**.

- Fulfilment**  
the ultimate aim  
of learning
- Citizenship**  
to advance the  
"common good"

**Culture**  
(demonstrating our values)

**Vision**  
(values and beliefs)



## Value For Money

Ethical leadership demands that public money devolved for the purposes of education must be spent prudently, wisely, and, with the odd exception, on the children in the academy 'today'. As a Sussex based Trust we know all about poor funding levels and how critical it is to extract the value of each and every pound. Historically, becoming an academy did bring financial advantage but now it is a cost neutral decision. The real value is derived from the extensive collaboration across the academies within the Trust. We know that schools enquiring about joining us will have high on their list of questions, 'what does it cost to become a partner in the SLT?' and 'what do we get for our money?'

Each year the Government devolves to the Trust the budget for each of the MAT academies. The Trust extracts the Annual Partnership Charge (APC) from this sum and the rest is left to the LGB to deliver the academies' published and intended outcomes and improvements. Most of the services included in the APC will directly assist in academy improvement or inform areas that should be worked on as priorities within the Academy Development Plan. The CEO and Officers will be committed to adding value to the improvement 'journey'.

## Associate Partners

The scheme allows academies to 'test the SLT water' before fully committing. The table overleaf details the included benefits to being an associate academy for one academic year.



	Primary	Secondary	Associate	Regularity
<b>Education Support and challenge for the Head &amp; LT by SLT Officers</b>				
Academy SEF support	✓	✓	✓	3 pa
Academy Development Plan	✓	✓	✓	3 pa
Supportive Data Review	✓	✓	✓	1 pa
Pupil Premium Reviews	✓	✓		as req
Pastoral System Reviews	✓	✓		as req
Department Reviews	✓	✓		as req
SEND Review of provision	✓	✓		as req
Governance support and guidance	✓	✓	✓	
Progress of groups of children	✓	✓		as req
Safeguarding	✓	✓		1 pa
Leadership mentoring/coaching	✓	✓	✓	as req
Line management of Head on behalf of LGB	✓	✓		6 pa +
Emergency Plan 'testing'	✓	✓	✓	1 pa
Consultant expert for LGB in Performance Review of Head	✓	✓	✓	2 pa
Heads Forum - CPD (bi-weekly)	✓	✓	✓	19 pa
Oversight' - bringing current thinking into each academy	✓	✓		on-going
<b>Strategic Support from Chief Operating Officer &amp; team</b>				
Support in budget setting	✓	✓	✓	2 pa
Risk management	✓	✓	✓	2 pa
Operational consultancy, i.e. premises, HR, leases	✓	✓		as req
Core finance support and oversight	✓	✓		3 hr p/w
Accounting & reporting support	✓	✓		as req
Academy compliance support	✓	✓		as req
Payroll SLA	✓	✓		12 pa
First call HR legal support	✓	✓		as req
ICT Strategy support, i.e. risk identification, procurement, esafety	✓	✓		as req
Contract Procurement - support, guidance and efficiencies	✓	✓		as req
Premises	✓	✓		as req
Grants and fundraising expertise	✓	✓		as req
Exploration of 'back office' costs and potential efficiencies	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Recent examples of collaborative projects</b>	✓	✓	Some	
Cross-phase HA literacy				
Secondary Sports Leaders in primary classes				
DT GCSE product testing with primary				
Cross-trust pupil voice				
Cross-trust charitable work				
Secondary led Kindness Initiative				
Primary MFL teaching				
Character Education Strategy				
e-learning & e-safety strategy				
Transition workshops, En & Ma				
<b>Annual Partnership Charge</b>	<b>5% GAG</b>	<b>3% GAG</b>	<b>negotiated</b>	

## Policy Decisions

Where practical, the Trust has policies that encompass all of its academies. For example, HR policies, safeguarding etc. However, where there needs to be a 'local' policy the CEO will agree to this being appended onto the Trust policy or an additional policy to be adopted by the LGB if required. The Trust has very clear expectations aligned to its vision and all policies and ways of working must complement these.





# What OFSTED Says About the Trust

*You (the Head), along with trustees of the Sussex Learning Trust and governors, share an admirable sense of moral purpose and determination to provide the best possible education for pupils. Staff, parents and carers are highly supportive of your leadership and the improvements being made.*

**(WPPA Ofsted June 2019)**

*Governors ..... demonstrate a good level of knowledge and expertise, ensuring that they receive appropriate training. They carry out their statutory duties thoughtfully, working well with the trust for the benefit of pupils in the school*

**(WPPA Ofsted June 2019)**

*The Academy Board of Directors are responsible for the governance of the school. Collectively they bring a wide range of skills and experience which support the development of the Academy and the wider Trust. Directors<sup>1</sup> have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school. They are proud of the improvements made, without becoming complacent about the next steps needed to improve the school further. Directors<sup>1</sup> are well informed about the Academy's performance. They balance the views of the Headteacher with those of other leaders, external evaluations and their own observations. Directors<sup>1</sup> are rigorous in the way they hold senior leaders to account. They are able to show how performance management is used to reward strengths and challenge underperformance.*

**(WPPA OFSTED June 2015)**

In addition to these commendations, the Secretary of State for Education has approved the Trust to open a brand new school for Haywards Heath. Hurst Farm Primary Academy will have a curriculum with a STEM focus. The Regional Schools Commissioner is keen for the Trust to expand within the region and is accordingly very supportive of our work. Now is the

opportunity for any school joining in our collaborative Trust to be at the beginning of our expansion. There is the advantage that we are a 'young' Trust rather than a 'new' Trust. We know what we are doing and yet we want to develop and continually improve and new partners would be able to contribute and influence how we do this.

<sup>1</sup> The DfE now require the term 'Trustee' for Trust Board members

## The vision for our academies

Irrespective of background, all children and young people deserve the very best educational provision and should therefore attend ambitious and dynamic establishments.

Sussex Learning Trust academies work collaboratively to provide 'world class' formational and transformational opportunities helping our young people realise their potential and equipping them in their journey towards personal fulfilment and responsible citizenship.

## What we do well

- a) Safeguarding.
  - b) Offer wide choices of opportunities to all learners in our academies.
  - c) Continually improve educational standards in our academies.
  - d) Governance.
  - e) Recruit and retain high performing school leaders.
  - f) Collaborate.
- ## How we will continue to improve?
- a) Diminish the gap between DLs and national 'others' in each academy.
  - b) All learner outcomes significantly above national average.
  - c) Shared approach to staff appraisal.
  - d) Train more teachers, enhance further development opportunities for existing staff.
  - e) Develop a shared language of learning & teaching to enhance outcomes.

## Strategic Objectives and Organisation Goals

### 1. Outcomes and collaboration

1. Raise performance indicators across all academies towards FFT5, especially for disadvantaged learners. (JM)

2. Enhance financial sustainability achieved via shared services, collaborative learning opportunities and income. (CG)

3. Further embed our culture of collaboration across all academies. (SD)

4. Develop an IT learning & functions strategy. (MS)

5. To be a recognised MAT of excellence for Character Education. (SD)

### 2. Continued, sustainable and strategic growth

1. Extend MS hub – more opportunity for sharing BP.

2. Potentially - another hub – learn from other areas.

3. Increase career options, develop emerging talent and succession plan.

### 3. Establish, and promote, the SLT vision for new academies

1. JM to lead consultation on the 'SLT way' for primary, secondary and all-through new free-schools which can be adapted for each potential new setting.

2. Actively seek opportunities to bid for new free-schools that can enhance our vision of collaborative best practise.

### 4. SLT people & community

1. Maintain and develop our individual academy's reputations so that we remain healthily oversubscribed with pupils/students for whom we were first choice.

2. Ensure we are fully-staffed with our first-choice candidates. SLT recruitment strategy implemented

3. Increasingly recognised as a responsible and important stakeholder in the success of the locality economy and well-being.

# Strategic Plan 2019

## Key Performance Indicators

Sept 2020 – All our academies have data to support, at least, movement towards an outstanding judgement at their next inspection.

Sept 2020 – An established, yet dynamic, IT strategy

Dec 2019 – additional potential partners in dialogue/DD with us

Jan 2020 – aligned Character Education programmes

Sept 2020 – we are actively participating in bidding rounds or serious contenders for free-school presumption processes

## Dec 2019 – What will our organisation look like?

An organisation that is resilient and sophisticated, proactively leading and inspiring a community of world class education providers.



## A Brief History of SLT

Our Trust began as the Warden Park Academy Trust in 2011 when the successful school of the same name in Cuckfield became one of the first schools in the Country to convert to Academy status. Shortly afterward Heyworth Primary School in Haywards Heath became a constituent part of the Trust and changed its name to Warden Park Primary Academy (WPPA). In 2014 Jonathan Morris joined the Trust as CEO and the Trust decided to change its name to reflect its intention to reach out and partner with like minded schools and academies.

The transformation of WPPA from 'special measures' to the threshold of 'outstanding' has been remarkable and testament to outstanding leadership and the benefits of being in a Multi-academy Trust. Meanwhile Warden Park Secondary Academy

(WPSA) has gone from strength to strength and is working towards an 'outstanding' accreditation in 2019.

In 2017 the Trust welcomed Northlands Wood Primary Academy (NWPA) as a partner. Benefitting from excellent leadership at all levels, NWPA is another extremely strong academy. The relationship between our Primary and Secondary academies is outstanding providing excellent pedagogical and Professional Development links and opportunities for teachers. Students and pupils mix readily in shared learning projects with very desirable outcomes. The relationship can be defined as one of mutuality.

# Key People



**Jonathan Morris**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## Experience, Skills Set and Expertise

Jonathan entered the teaching profession after successful careers in Business and Social Work. He was appointed to his first Headship in January 2007 at St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley, having worked in leadership roles in two of the most successful schools in the country. During his 7 years at St. Wilfrid's, the school was transformed from being 'at risk' of a poor OFSTED judgement to being in the top 5% of schools nationally for value added and was the highest performing school in West Sussex for exceeding student progress against FFTD targets. In 2012, OFSTED judged the school's leadership as "outstanding" as was student behaviour and safety.

Since coming to post at Warden Park Secondary Academy (WPSA) as joint Headteacher and CEO, standards at GCSE have improved from their already strong position by 14%. In 2017 OFSTED judged leadership at WPSA as 'outstanding'.

In April 2016, Jonathan was selected as a **National Leader of Education** and, in this role, he works alongside academy staff to support schools in challenging circumstances. He has a track record of working collegiately with other leaders to add significant value to their own school improvement initiatives.



**Jonathan Ash-Edwards**  
*Chair of Trustees*

## Experience, Skills Set and Expertise

Jonathan has been a member of the Board since 2007 and currently serves as Chair. As a former student of one of the Trust's academies, he knows local schools well and is committed to ensuring the Trust and its academies offer young people the best opportunities in life.

Jonathan led the Board's decision to convert to academy status, establishing the Trust which is now Sussex Learning Trust, leading to a transformation in academic standards in our academies. During his time as Chair, Jonathan has been involved in two Ofsted inspections, both of which have judged the Trust's governance as being highly effective.

As well as experience running a small business, Jonathan is Deputy Leader of Mid Sussex District Council, where he is responsible for giving strategic direction and leadership to the local authority. His portfolio responsibilities also include financial management, budget setting, performance management and economic development.

In April 2016 Jonathan was appointed as a **National Leader of Governance**, a role which involves supporting chairs of governors in other schools; part of the Government's plan to give schools a central role in developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system. Recently, Jonathan has been awarded a contract by the DfE for Governor training. He is very highly regarded in local and national educational circles.





**Steve Davis**

*Assistant CEO (Primary Strategy) and Headteacher Warden Park Primary*

### Experience, Skills Set and Expertise

Steve and his team have transformed WPPA. The positive impact that it has had on the surrounding community is outstanding. For the first time, ever, they have a 'good' school to proudly send their children to.

OFSTED said this of Steve and his leadership:-

This is a school which has improved considerably under the leadership of the well - respected Headteacher and the directors of the multi-academy trust.

The Headteacher is an inspiring leader. He has garnered the support of those around him and he has led the improvement of teaching well. As a result, middle leaders all understand exactly what they need to do to improve their areas further and all can point to the improvements already made.

Leaders have created a very positive culture within the academy. Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the improvements in the school and the plans for the future. There is a tangible sense of purpose throughout the school. Staff work hard because they understand what they are working to achieve.

Leaders have taken the right actions so that teaching has improved significantly and many pupils are making rapid progress.



**Colin Granlund**

*Assistant CEO (Business & Finance)*

### Experience, Skills Set and Expertise

Colin's role within the Trust:

- To ensure effective financial and commercial performance of the Trust's Academies
- To provide business and commercial leadership and support where needed across the Trust
- To provide a link between The Trust and member academies by working with the Trustees, Governors and Leadership Teams
- To develop and manage The Trust's buildings estates strategy, ensuring all sites are fit for purpose and to identify capital and bidding opportunities
- To develop and manage the in house catering operation on two sites value c. £540K. It is our intention to have in house catering at Hurst Farm
- To develop aspects of community and business involvement to maximise Trust engagement

### Key projects and achievements include:

- Meeting and exceeding key financial management and budget targets for the Trust and in particular additional income over several years.
- Construction of a £2M extension to Warden Park Primary Academy.
- Construction of a 3G Multi sports pitch.
- Initiated and project lead on several premises development projects including the installation of a new high performance boiler and heating system, funded by CIF Grants and Salix Loans.
- Leader of a project team to deliver a programme to provide iPads to all 1500 students and over 120 staff to revolutionise learning and reduce capital expenditure.

# Trustees

The Board of Trustees has a wide mix of skills and experience which add significant value to the Trust and its member academies.

## Trustees



**Jeff Thompson**

Retired head of the consulting business for a London accounting firm and a Governor with 14 years of experience in primary and secondary education. Experience includes:

- business strategy, financial control and operational management
- leading diverse teams in complex and highly regulated environments
- Chair of Governors focusing on growth and development of rural primary schools
- financial Governor focusing on risk management, budget planning and project funding



**Esther Gunter**

Legal recruitment manager and trainer with a broad commercial skills set and management experience. Experience includes:

- analysing individuals' potential and skills
- coaching and supporting staff and clients/candidates to identify career desires and support them through interview preparation
- advising businesses on employer branding, candidate attraction, interview processes and recruitment market intelligence
- nurturing talent, developing graduate or "first job" staff to be successful innovative employees



**Hamish Hill**

Clinical Psychologist, currently specialising in assessment, therapeutic work and care coordination activities with children, young people (aged 2-20) and their families, including post-adoption support work. Experience includes:

- extensive experience in parenting work with special interest in attachment-focussed therapies
- CBT, ACT, EMDR, family work, group work and attachment-focussed work
- delivering assessment, therapy and care coordination / systemic consultation
- teaching, research, editorial and service development projects



**Claire Homer**

Director of local business. Experienced Governor and Chair of the governing board during Northlands Wood's conversion to academy status and joining the Trust. Experience includes:

- running a successful local business (broad commercial skills)
- leading and managing teams
- developing talent, including apprentices

## Trustees



### Joelle Packham

Extensive career in marketing and communications (working internationally) for a global engineering and energy firm, including focussing on recruiting communications and graduate recruitment. BA in French and Communication and an MA in Media and Communications. Broad commercial skills. Experience also includes

- specialising in marketing and communications
- introducing internships and work experience placements within business
- recruiting and mentoring young talent



### Jenny Pearman

Head of Client Services for a London based Software Services Company (Broadcast and Music industry). Broad commercial skill set. Experience includes:

- managing complex relationships across a wide variety of clients, balancing the clients' needs against the company's policy and growth
- assisting in growing a business from a start-up with one UK client to a globally recognised solutions provider that is driving the industry standards in an ever changing and diverse market
- developing teams and working with a diverse range of people (from the creators of programming and music through to legal and technical teams effecting business change and ensuring compliance obligations are met)



### Roger Tapping

Lead (Reporting Inspector) for the Independent School Inspectorate. Holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Former teacher (36 year teaching career) in non SLT schools and Chartered Geographer. Experience includes:

- management of Departments (including managing Learning Support)
- management and analysis of performance data
- training in Compliance, Safer Recruitment, Child Protection, Prevent, Safety Management on Educational Visits
- former Chair of the WPSA Pastoral and Safeguarding Committee



### Phil Todd

Chartered Engineer and Managing Director for a pioneering Building Services Engineering Company with offices in England and Ireland. Broad commercial and management skills. Experience includes:

- managing teams and projects
- designing and delivering world class schools and education facilities
- delivering STEM support
- advising on procurement, Health and Safety management and improvements, development of ICT facilities and support

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[www.northlandswood.co.uk](http://www.northlandswood.co.uk)

for more information, go to our website  
[www.sussexlearningtrust.co.uk](http://www.sussexlearningtrust.co.uk)



New Academy Opening Soon